

Snuff Out Secondhand Smoke⁷³

For too long, the Environmental Protection Agency has been unable to cough up a not-so-surprising finding that secondhand tobacco smoke is a major health hazard.

Apparently like a soup that can't be rushed, the EPA has for two years batted and hawed while the scientific evidence and the conclusion of a scientific panel were denounced by the tobacco industry.

But with outgoing EPA Administrator William K. Reilly's reported endorsement of the findings, the agency is prepared today to agree with the panel's conclusion that environmental tobacco smoke is a "Class A" human carcinogen, putting it in the same killer category as asbestos, arsenic and benzene.

The EPA, itself, can't do much with the report, other than to provide ammunition for other government agencies, such as the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which regulate indoor air pollution. Which, we hope, will be enough to finally remove this hazard from the work and other public places.

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